

WHY DO BABIES CRY?

Hungry – When babies are only a few weeks old, they may need to eat more often than you expect. Don't insist on a rigid schedule (at least not at this stage). If it has been an hour or more since your baby was last fed, he might be crying because he's hungry.

Lonely – If baby calms and stays calm as soon as you pick him up, he missed you! Remember, baby was in a snugly womb, hearing a heart beat for 9 months. Baby's need for closeness is very real. You can't spoil a baby by cuddling him when he needs it – or when you need.

Cold or Hot – Feel baby's back or tummy to see if he is too cool or too hot. Adjust clothing to make him comfortable. Dress baby like yourself, or one layer warmer.

Over Stimulated – Lots of people bouncing or talking to baby at once may overdo it. Give your baby some peace and quiet. Rocking him in a dimly lit room may help.

Undressed – Some babies don't like to be undressed. Put cloth on your baby's tummy until you redress him.

Startled – Baby may move suddenly, startle and cry. Wrapping a blanket securely around him and holding him firmly may calm him.

Wet Diapers – Some babies don't mind; others do.

Pain – Baby may be ill or uncomfortable because a pin is pricking him or his clothes have sharp tags or zippers.

Sleepy – Some babies need to fuss a bit before sleeping

SOME BABIES DEVELOP COLIC

Colicky babies have tummy pains and loud piercing cries. These cries can last a few minutes or several hours, usually at the same time each day. Nobody knows what causes colic. Sometimes a colicky baby won't stop crying even after you've tried the usual things. It's not your fault, or the baby's fault.

For a colicky baby, try these ideas:

*Lay baby across your knees; rub or pat his back.

*Rock baby at 60 rocks per minute – a slow adult walk, or use an infant swing. Walk with him tucked under your arm, with your hand under his tummy. Or hold baby so he can look around to see things.

*Change his bath time to evening.

*Give the evening feeding with baby upright, not lying down. Burp him well to get air out of his tummy.

Offer a pacifier. Sucking helps relax his stomach.

*Go for a ride in the car, putting him in a car safety seat.

*Sing to him, or play soft music. Sometimes a vacuum cleaner, fan or radio tuned to static may help calm him.

*Talk to baby's doctor to see if he/she has other ideas.

CRYING IS A CALL FOR HELP

During the first few weeks, babies cannot control when he/she starts to cry. Babies cry only when in need, and can't stop until those needs are met – or until he/she is too tired to go on.

Studies have shown that mothers who respond quickly to their baby's cries had babies who later cried less.

When you've had enough

Sometimes, it may seem your baby never stops crying. This can be very stressful and hard to listen to. But don't take your angry feelings out on the baby – he/she can't help it.

If you can stand the crying, then hold your baby and walk, dance or rock in a chair. Babies like to be held, and some babies calm with gentle movement.

If you've tried everything – feeding, changing, cuddling – and the baby still cries, try calling a friend or relative to watch your baby for an hour. Everyone needs a break like this at times.

As a last resort, put the baby in his crib and shut the door. Take a shower, or vacuum. You won't hear him/her, and the noise might calm your baby.

MAKE YOUR BABY'S WORLD MORE INTERESTING

Your amazing newborn has all the same senses you do. Even at birth, babies can see, hear, smell, taste and touch.

Vision – Babies prefer to look at faces. For the first few weeks of life, they see best at a distance of 8 to 12 inches (about the distance between your face and theirs when you hold them close to feed or to talk to them).

Bright colors, high-contrast patterns and shiny things are more interesting to babies than pale colors. Babies may follow moving objects with their eyes for a few seconds. During the first weeks, their heads turn to the side when they lie down. So hang mobiles from the side of the crib, not from the top.

Hearing – Infants may turn their heads toward the source of an interesting noise. They prefer gentle voices. By the time babies are three weeks old, they may recognize their mom's and dad's voices. When your baby is upset, soft music may help calm him.

Smell – Young babies react to smells. Strong, harsh smells make baby turn his head away and cry. By one week of age, babies know the smell of their own mothers.

Touch – Touching is very important to babies. Being held close and cuddled helps babies know that their world is a friendly place. In fact, studies have shown that holding babies for more hours each day causes them to cry less. Hold your baby, or use a frontpack. Being in your arms and hearing your heart beat makes baby feel safe.

Cuddle and hold your baby whenever you want. Don't worry about spoiling him. Babies are supposed to be babied! While you're at it, share a hug with the rest of your family. You'll all feel better for it.

Babies can also sense movement from very early on. Motion, like rocking and walking, helps calm a crying baby. Remember, he spends nine months floating inside the uterus; he's used to rocking and moving around. Holding him upright also lets him look around, so he may cry less.

NEVER shake a baby. This can cause blindness, brain damage or death.

Reading pages 3-4 and answering the following 5 questions will count for 15 minutes of training that will cover the annual training area of **Coping with Crying Babies**. Keep this sheet in your file for documentation of training. Circle the correct answer:

1. If you answer quiet cries consistently, baby learns...
(a) doesn't have to scream. (b) being spoiled is fun. (c) mom runs fast.
2. When a baby stops crying when he's held, it may mean...
(a) he's teasing. (b) he missed you. (c) he's ready for a bath.
3. If you fed, changed, cuddled and rocked baby and he's still crying, he might be...
(a) cantankerous. (b) shallow. (c) colicky.
4. If the baby is colicky, you can try...
(a) sing or play soft music. (b) going out to weed. (c) play hide and seek.
5. Can a baby get bored with their surroundings?
(a) yes (b) no